a. 26

1911

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

April 6th

Beloved,

I hope you had a record bad crossing. Really, luck is the very best. However, its no use speculating now about it, as I shant hear; & you are crossing Europe.

I am alone; Ray has just gone. We had meant to motor, but the snow kept us indoors. We went out once, & got bleached & drenched; she floundered like a calf. However, talk proved interesting. Here comes a piece of Gossip which you must keep private. Talking of Oliver Strachey. she said "I can quite imagine falling in love

with him" I said "I suppose you mean
you are in love with him". She said
"No. I only see that I might be — but I
don't want to be." I said "Is he
in love with you?" She said "Oh no —
not a bit. But he was very friendly."
This morning however, she had a letter
from him asking her to go over some
railway works. NYPL This evidently pleased
her very much. I'm pretty sure there
will be an affair in that direction;
She is either in love, or on the verge of it,
So if it happens don't say "Poor Lytge!
Snubbed again!" At any rate,
it seems clear that he is in a very
susceptible state of mind, & you must
therefore discount his attentions to me.
The Russells, Ray says, are trying to bring
off a match between him & Isabel Fry.
Poor wretch! — he has jumped into a kettle, as

a 26 ii

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

~~You~~ yr would say. It promises to be a lively summer.

Ray told me that she is really very susceptible to men, though no man has been in love with her. She always takes out the ground, as she calls it, with a new man; & considers the possibilities. "Could yr marry Adrian?" I asked her. She said that would be impossible. She is a good satisfactory creature, as downright as a poker, a very queer mixture of the foremost & imagined love. But perhaps one would find her a little heavy? She told me that Mrs Berenson had treated old Costelloe very badly, as he really had great merits. It now seems possible. (this is further gossip, secret, & probably inaccurate) that she will leave B as his temper has grown intolerable; & she is very unhappy,

What a sheet of amorous gossip! But now
that I'm alone you want here anything
but talk of trees a downs. If only
it would stop blowing a snowing, I should
be very happy. Having servants,
turns this home into a comfortable respectable
place. They are very godhamoured,
though Sophie seem to jam in the doors
rather.

Ray is coming back next week.
I've not heard from Sayon or the
MacCarthys; but I should rather like a
week alone. I feel a little
worried about you. I see that the Ostend
boat had to wait an hour at Dover.
I feel pretty sure that I shall have to
announce Olivier's engagement to Ray in
my next!

Yr B.

NYPL

HAMILL 2/16/70

a 27

1911

I suppose to-morrow I ought to write to Greece, but I'm not sure.

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

April 5th

Beloved,

Another card came this morning from Passau, which I told Sophie, is in Germany. Anyhow, you sound safe so far. I think Mother will only have it for tabs a quantity.

My news threatens to dry up - a general always the doubt whether you'll get the letter. I've had letter from Ray, Molly MacCarthy, & Saxon. I think Ray's letter hints at possible mysteries: She says that fate is interfering with her plans - Can Olivier have proposed 2. She spent 4 days with him; & they met at Oxford - it might have hastened. There can be

a 27

1911

I suppose to women I ought to write & grace, but to I'm not here.

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

April 5th

Beloved,

Another card came this morning from Passau, which I told Sophie, is in Germany. Anyhow, you sound safe so far. I think Molly MacCarthy is only bad if you take a quantity.

My news threatens to dry up - a plenè always the doubt whether you'll get the letter. I've had letter from Ray, Molly MacCarthy, & Saxon. I think Ray's letter hints at possible mysteries: She says what fate is interfering with her plans - Can Olivier have proposed 2. She spent 4 days with him; or they met at Oxford — it might have happened - There can be

no doubt, I think about her side of it. She said
She'd felt much the same for 4 or 5 other men.
But I thought there was something on his side
too. What old gossips we are!

Molly & Desmond are in the Isle of Wight, so
they cant come. Soyer sends a very
exquisite letter in red ink; he talks of 'they'
& 'he', complains & wishes me to propose another
literary work for his evenings; he is
feeling very cold, & cannot risk coming here.
I shall probably be alone till the 19th.
I am rather amused at being alone. I
haven't been alone in the country since that
summer at Wells, when I used to get
letters from Hilton. NYPL I write all the
morning, walk all the afternoon, &
read & write & look out of the window the
rest of the time. The country is so
amazingly beautiful. that I frequently
have to stop & say "good God!"
I went to a mediaeval castle in the marsh

(a 27/ii)

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

this afternoon. Well – I went describing; but
promise me to come here for Sunday
after you get back, & to say whether
anything in Europe beats it. The
plovers were in a tremendous excitement.
I met Lord Gage in the village. He's
not only crouch backed, but he is bitten by
the same disease as Porchy. He has a
face like a dead hares, only whiter –
scarlet. He was hobbling along on the
Vicar arm, to inspect the tombs in the
Church. They looked at me; & I'd
fallen into dike, & got mud up to the
knees! Happily, Maud had put a
tuck into my petticoat.
The old gentleman, a clergyman,
is being persuaded to bury the head of
Cromwell. They say it's indecent to keep it
in a box.

I have the greatest desire to see it; & even stroke it. There'st for[2]
That is really the only news in England.
If anyone praises me, say so. Its odd,
retiring from the world like this.
I feel as if I were 15 again – one
begins to think of books & describing
scenery just as one used. I am
reading the Liaison Dangereuses with
great delight.

This is all very dull. Adrian
has got to Marseilles, & suddenly
discovers Hans' chain in his
pocket. This causes a good deal
of excitement in the kitchen. Sophie
& Maud sit all day machining curtains
in the dining room, & talking very
comfortably & incessantly. What can
they have to say, I wonder?

Yr B

You'll be at Cambridge today. How
exciting!

NYPL

HAMILL 2/16/70

a-28

1911

The man at the
Post office has
puffled me with this
unarkable addres.

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

19th April.

Beloved,

I've just come in from meeting Eily, & find your wire. As you say all is well. I suppose I am a fool to worry. At any rate all my doubts will be cleared up tomorrow or Friday. So I want Watts paper describing them. Only if you knew what anxieties you can send across the ocean, you would be extensively careful. You seem to do so much; are'nt your males a little exacting?

I've had some intercourse with the world since I wrote. Ka came striding along the road in time for lunch yesterday; with a knapsack on her back, a row of red beads, a daisy stuck in her coat.

Her innocent face was brown. We went for a walk; & lay on the grass, & hovered the view. Then she began to talk me of her private affairs, which are very private; so best there them. What advice would you have given I wonder? The state of the case is this. Jacques, as ye knew, proposed to her, less than a year ago. She refused him several times. At last this autumn, thinking she would never care, she urged him to consider Gwen. Gwen quickly fell in love; & Jacques, seeing his, was overcome, proposed. & was accepted. He says now that he is in love with them both; & asks Ka to be his mistress, a Gwen to satisfy his mind. Gwen is made very jealous; Ka evidently care a good deal for Jacques. Obviously (in my view) J. is very much in love with K: & not much, if at all, with Gwen.

NYPL

(a-28 ii)

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

Ought they to break off the Engagement? J.
has doubts, occasionally; Ka sometimes
thinks she could marry him; Gwen alternately
grows desperate, & then, accepting J's. advanced
views, suggests that Ka shall have wife & two,
& bear children, while she paints.
There are endless possibilities of discomfort; but
Cynically considering the infantine natures of
all concerned, I predict nothing serious.
Ka will marry a Brooke next year, I expect.
J. will always be a Volatile Frog. Gwen
will bear children & paint pictures;
clearly though, J. & K. would be the
proper match.

I've just seen Ka off, & fetched Lily here.
Lily is very stout; but very nice. In
the pauses between raptures over hills &
Clouds, She gave me her version of the
affair. She agrees with me that
J. is much more in love with K. than with

Gwen: She thinks [illegible] tremendous; but
say that of it is broken off. Gwen will
certainly go off her head. I rather
doubt that; but she would be very
unhappy, & perhaps this is her only chance.
The trouble is, to my mind, that they're
none of them clever enough to carry the thing
through successfully; & J. has muddled
their minds with talk of the unchastity of
Chastity.

God! How I wish I knew about you!
I am now going to take Sicky for a
walk. She has already told me that its
a great bore marrying a man without
fasts. Hardy made a large sum by a
story. Bernard bought her a picture, as a
surprise: it was a work by a man called
Belcher, who draws for Punch. She says
she found it very difficult to be grateful.
We shall go to Fiona on Monday night. 24a
Address letters to Post Restante, Poitiers. until
31st. I shall come back on the 1st I think.
All the places are close, & Poitiers will be
our headquarters. LvB.

NYPL

HA.MSS 2/16/70

a 29

1911

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

April 20th.

Beloved,

I'm writing in haste, before starting for an expedition to the sea with Lily. No letter has come from you, which is disappointing but as Clive wires to London, you may think I'm there.

We have talked a good deal; she is a nice woman, in spite of her marriage. I have heard about Conder; & Bernard past. He was neglected as a small boy, by his step mother; & this led him to take to golf which Lily says, has ruined his life. When he has enough to live on, he will do nothing but play. One can only hope he will be struck dead on the golf course;

for I suppose one can grow too old for folly.
Her memories of John & Conder are far
more alive than anything else. But
she is much agitated now about the
Gwen & Jacques affair. Gwen comes
to her & sobs, because she is so jealous,
but won't say who she's jealous of.
I'm sure J. will always be susceptible; —
as Gwen will grow stout, be will room
widely.

The only other gossip was about Olive.
Helton cut her at some party; she was
desperate. She wrote to Fredegond, &
said that if Fredegond did not bring
about a meeting & a reconciliation before the
End of the year, she would kill herself.
F: doesn't seem Know Helton; but was
much agitated, went to Frances Cornford.
Frankly, having seen Helton, understood that
Olive's case was hopeless, & wrote to Olive

a 29 ii

Little Talland House,
Firle, Lewes,
Sussex.

a very strong letter, chasing her for praising
upon Fredegond. All this has only
just happened. Olive says there is
something on her conscience, which she
must put right by seeing him. Can this
be anything to do with me? Eily
of course, knew what my affair; She say
Olive has told the story to all the young
generation.

I must stop, as we have to catch
a train: Only seen tomorrow.
Oh dear, I wish I'd heard from you.
I'm flourishing.

W.B.

I cant help wishing you'd be more explicit
in your telegrams, but it no use wishing!

a30

June 1911.

29,
Fitzroy Square,
W.

Thursday.

Beloved,

A dreadful Whit Sunday blackness has descended upon us. We hoped that the storm would lighten the air – far from it. The storm was terrific. As nearly as possible, Synge was taken from us. A great flash almost came in at the window. A Church was set on fire. Did for frail horribly depressed? I died. I could not write, & ate the devils Came out – heavy black ones. To be 29 & unmarried – to be a failure – Children – misery too, no writer. I went off to the Museum to try a lecture them, & having an ice afterwards,

Met Rupert Brooke, with, presumably, a Miss Olivier. Her beauty was marred by protruberant Ptomishes; as she was said beautiful, only a pretty chit, perhaps the waist miss Olivier.

Today the mgs are rather less hilly, in spite of the fact that we have just had Sayon to dinner. NYPL Mabel brother has had four fingers cut off by a machine for making pear drops. She sweets stuck - he put his hand in to free them, & it was drawn in to the mill. The misery of the lower classes impresses me very much. I think I losing a hand making pear drops!

Marjorie has just telephoned Goodbye. Tomorrow she goes into a Rest Cure in

a 30 ii

29,
Fitzroy Square,
W.

Mecklenburgh Square. She has some
strange symptoms which do not get better.
At the same time Elly has broken
down; she too goes into a nursing
home.

I think a good deal about you.
How are you feeling? What a
blessing it would be if you came back
completely cured! How the Apes
would rejoice. The tea party
is tomorrow. I will wire if
Billy gets the first prize.

Please get Roger to settle

what day he will come to Fitz.
& press him to. Then I will
get Desmond. Every one is
away now I suppose.

I shall probably be down
to Fitz alone on Saturday,
which will be rather a treat.

As it is very hot, & Adgie & Sason
are sweating at the Opera, I am
going up to Hampstead to see if I
can drag old Case out for a walk
among the lovers on the Heath.
This Lasts explains the dulness of his letter:
nevertheless every words flows like a loose
shoe on the anvil with passion. These
June nights! — how amorous they
make one. Tell me how you are & any
adventures. Yrs B.

NYPL

HAMILL 2/16/70